

# KESGRAVE TOWN COUNCIL

## Biodiversity Policy



### Introduction

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 there is a duty on public authorities in England, including Parish & Town Councils, to have regard to conserving biodiversity as part of their policy or decision making.

This was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021, so public authorities must now consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in England. This means a public authority must:

- consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity;
- agree policies and specific objectives based on their consideration; and
- act to deliver policies and achieve objectives.

Biodiversity refers to the variety of life on earth as defined in 'Biodiversity 2020: a strategy of England's wildlife and ecosystems' by DEFRA.

### Background

- a) The built-out area of Kesgrave is that of modern suburbia and this is sandwiched between, to the north, extensive wooded countryside in private ownership and, to the south, a substantial area of agricultural and heathland containing further large wooded areas, also predominantly in private ownership.
- b) Council owns certain tracts of Public Open Space (POS) e.g. Legion Green, the Millennium Sportsground and Oak Meadow playing field. Its stock of land is set to expand significantly under its Business Plan 2025-28. Under this plan, Council will assume greater and greater responsibility for grass cutting and other land maintenance requirements, for example associated with the adoption of woodland.
- c) Council consulted the community widely in preparing its Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which was made in May 2021. When asked what uses could be made of the existing POSs, 80% wished to see it protected as such with 62% also wishing it to be maintained to encourage biodiversity and wildflowers. Accordingly, Objective Four in the NP reads: "To ensure wildlife thrives and wildlife corridors are protected and enhanced."; and relevant policies were incorporated, in particular:
  - i. *Policy KE5 Local Green Spaces* in which use was made of the option afforded by the National Planning Policy Framework to so designate the six largest area of POS in the built up area and in so doing afford them green belt level of protection against development.
  - ii. *Policy KE6 Wildlife Conservation* where permitted development is required to contribute positively towards the biodiversity of Kesgrave by retaining the features of biodiversity importance on the site as part of a development and providing wildlife-friendly features as part of the design of new buildings and open spaces. Where possible these features should connect to and enhance existing ecological networks including protecting existing trees for the benefit of wildlife and providing additional trees wherever appropriate.

- d) The KTC Business Plan 2021-24: Third Annual Review published in April 2025 sets out in Section 3 the extensive actions taken by Council through the Community & Recreation Committee and Council's dedicated officers and employees to breathe life into these NP strategic policies. The KTC Business Plan 2025-28 does the same in terms of setting out specific development actions to promote biodiversity in the coming period.

### **Council responsibilities**

Council will:

- Consider the impact on biodiversity in the decisions it takes, especially when commenting on planning applications.
- Limit the use of pesticides and herbicides on land owned by Council and liaise with the parties responsible for maintenance activity on land not owned by Council with the same aim.
- Make proactive decisions in relation to the land it owns, when safe and appropriate to do so, such as
  - Leaving standing and fallen dead wood as a habitat for invertebrates
  - Leaving leaf litter and dead vegetation wherever possible as a habitat for invertebrates
  - Removing invasive and non-invasive species that are detrimental to native flora or fauna as required.
  - Leaving a wildflower border when cutting
  - When required for safety, using non-detrimental weed control
  - Continue to support organisations that foster biodiversity initiatives

Council will look to promote biodiversity via the Council website.

Council will ensure that biodiversity is a consideration in the delivery of its services, policies and mandates.

Policy effective from: 02 June 2025

Date for next review: 02 June 2028